

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

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USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 1658

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, UY

SUBJ: INCREASED MILITARY PARTICIPATION IN THE BORDABERRY
ADMINISTRATION

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

REF: MVD 1360

1. SUMMARY. THERE IS INCREASING EVIDENCE THAT, PARTIALLY AS
A RESULT OF THE CHIAPPE AFFAIR (SEE REFTTEL), THE MILITARY AND PRESIDENT
HAVE AGREED TO A MODUS OPERANDI FOR MAKING MAJOR POLICY AND
PERSONNEL DECISIONS WHICH THE PRESIDENT WILL BE EXPECTED TO IMPLEMENT.
PRESIDENT BORDABERRY, FOLLOWING THE DEPARTURE OF CHIAPPE
AND THAT (PERHAPS TEMPORARY) OF AGRICULTURE MINISTER MEDERO, HAS
AGREED TO ACCEPTING STRONGER MILITARY PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT
IN THE BELIEF THAT THIS CAN PRODUCE MORE EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT
AND THAT HIS REMAINING IN OFFICE IS OF PARAMOUNT NATIONAL
INTEREST IN THAT IT PERPETUATES AT LEAST A THREAD OF CONSTITUTIONALITY.

THIS MODUS OPERANDI DEPENDS UPON CONSENSUS AMONG SENIOR OFFICERS
AND THEIR ABILITY TO OBTAIN PRESIDENTIAL AGREEMENT OR ACQUIESCENCE.

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WHETHER THIS PROVES TO BE A VIABLE LONG-TERM MECHANISM FOR

GOVERNING REMAINS TO BE SEEN. HOWEVER ONE LOOKS AT IT, IT MARKS ANOTHER STEP IN THE MILITARY'S INCREASING CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT.

2. A FLAG RANK OFFICER TOLD AN EMBOFF THAT SENIOR OFFICERS WERE SHAKEN AT THE INTERNAL DISSENSION WHICH SURFACED IN THE ARMY WHEN THE THEN ARMY CINC, LTG CHIAPPE, MADE HIS POWER PLAY AND LOST. CONVINCED THAT ARMED FORCES UNITY IS ESSENTIAL, THE SENIOR OFFICERS HAVE FORMED A COMMITTEE "JUNTA DE GENERALES" WHICH INCLUDES ALL ACTIVE DUTY OFFICERS OF FLAG AND GENERAL RANK. THIS COMMITTEE, OPERATING ON THE BASIS OF CONSENSUS, WILL MAKE DECISIONS ON GOVERNMENT POLICY AND PERSONNEL. ITS DECISIONS WILL BE COMMUNICATED TO THE PRESIDENT BY THE THREE SERVICE CINC'S WHO WILL ACT AS A CONDUIT BETWEEN THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AND THE PRESIDENT. THUS, THE CINC'S WILL SPEAK AS WITH ONE VOICE NOT THREE. THE NEW ARRANGEMENT ALSO IS DESIGNED TO ASSURE THE SENIOR OFFICERS THAT THE CINC'S PRESENT THEIR COLLECTIVE VIEW RATHER THAN THE INDIVIDUAL VIEWS OF THE CINC'S AS THERE HAD BEEN A MMBER OF COMPLAINTS THAT CHIAPPE HAD SPOKEN WITH ONE VOICE WITH HIS PEERS AND ANOTHER WITH THE PRESIDENT.

3. THE PRESIDENT WANTS TO MAINTAIN THE THREAD OF CONSTITUTIONALITY REPRESENTED BY THE ELECTSZ CIVILIAN EXECUTIVE. WE BELIEVE THAT HE ALSO SHARES MOST OF THE MILITARY'S GOALS FOR THE NATION AND THAT HE WOULD BE MORE AT EASE HAVING THOSE INVOLVED OUT IN FRONT WITH HIM SHARING THE BURDEN. CONSEQUENTLY, HE HAS ACCEPTED THIS FURTHER INCREASE IN MILITARY PARTICIPATION. IN FACT, BORDABERRY VIRTUALL

DESCRIBED THE NEW RULES OF THE GAME TO A REUTERS CORRESPONDENT ON JUNE 8, PORTRAYING THE GOU AS A GOVERNMENT IN WHICH THE MILITARY PARTICIPATES IN MAKING DECISIONS WHICH ARE THEN IMPLEMENTED BY THE ADMINISTRATION.

4. THE SEMI-INSTITUTIONALIZED ARRANGEMENT HAS MANY INEFFICIENT AND AWKWARD ASPECTS. FIRST, IT PERPETUATES THE PERENNIAL URUGUAYAN PENCHANT FOR COMPROMISE AND COLLEGIATE (IN STYLE IF NOT IN SUBSTANCE) GOVERNMENT. SECOND, A COMMITTEE OF SOME 20 SENIOR OFFICERS, SEVERAL SERVING OUTSIDE OF MONTEVIDEO COULD PROVE TO BE CUMBERSOME AND UNWIELDY. THIRD, IN SEEKING TO OPERATE BY CONSENSUS IT MAY FAIL TO END THE PROBLEM OF EFFECTIVE VETOES BY MILITARY PEOPLE IN KEY COMMANDS WHO MIGHT NOT AGREE WITH THE CONSENSUS
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OF THEIR PEERS ON A GIVEN GUT ISSUE WHICH MAY ARISE. CONSENSUS MAY NOT BE ENFORCEABLE AS THE MILITARY, DESPITE ITS HOPES AND DESIRES, IS NOT OF ONE MIND. FOURTH, IT CAN FUNCTION ONLY AS LONG AS THEY ARE ABLE TO OBTAIN PRESIDENT BORDABERRY'S AGREEMENT WITH OR ACQUIESCENCE IN THE POLICY AND PERSONNEL RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED TO HIM, OR OTHERWISE AVOID A DECISIVE CONFRONTATION WITH HIM ON A FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE.

5. DESPITE THE CUMBERSOME ASPECTS OF THIS ARRANGEMENT, THE SPECTRE OF DIVISION SEEMS TO HAVE UNITED THE TOP MILITARY LEADERS FOR THE MOMENT. SOME ARE ENTHUSIASTIC, BELIEVING THAT A MEANS OF ARRIVING AT AGREEMENT HAS BEEN FOUND AND THAT MILITARY CONTROL OVER THE ADMINISTRATION IS ASSURED. THE COMMITTEE APPARENTLY HAS BEGUN TO FUNCTION. ONE MEMBER OF THE "JUNTA DE GENERALES" TOLD AN EMBOFF THAT THE GROUP WAS MEETING TO MAKE DECISIONS ON NEW MINISTERS AND ON OTHERS IN GOVERNMENT. THAT OFFICER WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE RELUCTANCE OF CAPABLE PEOPLE TO TAKE KEY GOVERNMENT POSTS WOULD DISAPPEAR NOW THAT THEY COULD BE ASSURED THAT MONTHS OF GOVERNMENT INDECISION WERE AT AN END. A LEADING ECONOMIST TOLD AN EMBOFF ON JUNE 11 THAT ONE OF THE CINC'S HAD OFFERED HIM A MINISTERIAL POST BUT THAT HE HAD DECLINED. HOWEVER, HE DID OFFER, IN RETURN, TO ADVISE A MILITARY MINISTER. IN ANY EVENT, EVIDENCE IS SOLID THAT THE MILITARY IS, AS THEY SAY, ACTIVELY RECRUITING PERSONNEL FOR KEY GOVERNMENT POSTS.

6. THE MILITARY'S NEWLY-CHOSEN INSTRUMENT FOR DECISION-MAKING IS STILL IN AN EMBRYONIC STAGE. THUS, IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO PREDICT ITS IMPACT ON OTHER INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL (COSENA), WHICH WAS CREATED EARLY IN 1973 TO PROVIDE THE MILITARY WITH A VOICE IN NATIONAL POLICY DECISIONS. SIRACUSA

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